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CONTACT: Nancy Guccione
WIRED Program Manager, Montana Department of Commerce
(406) 841-2744

Marissa Kozel
Montana Department of Commerce
(406) 841-2772

Montana Department of Commerce Supports Biofuels Education through \$87,500 WIRED Grant

(HELENA) – Today Montana Department of Commerce Director Anthony Preite presented the Ethanol Producers And Consumers (EPAC) of Montana with an **\$87,500** WIRED grant at the EPAC Ethanol Fuel Workshop in Glasgow. The WIRED grant award is intended to promote the biofuels and biolubricants industry through education.

EPAC will use the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant to conduct 13 workshops which will support the biofuels industry across the 32 county WIRED region in eastern and central Montana and on six Indian reservations.

“The WIRED program is a valuable catalyst that promotes education and training in the biofuels industry,” said Governor Brian Schweitzer. “Montana has the potential to be a leader in the future of clean energy, and these workshops will educate Montanans about the energy possibilities they have in their own back yards.”

“The Montana Department of Commerce is strongly committed to moving Montana’s Agro-Energy Plan forward through the WIRED program,” said Commerce Director Anthony Preite. “WIRED resources are helping teach and train Montanans today, for the jobs of tomorrow.”

The Commerce WIRED program has nearly \$3.5 million in grant funds available annually for customized worker training for businesses working with universities, colleges, high schools, and other training providers on specialized bio-product training and curriculum development. The program will also provide grants for WIRED eligible job training programs or projects that will enhance and expand the bio-product industry in the WIRED region.

Montana's WIRED program was created as a result of Governor Brian Schweitzer's commitment to value added agricultural energy projects. In January 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor approved Governor Schweitzer's application for the WIRED initiative. Montana's application was one of only 13 approved nationwide.

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